

IN THIS ISSUE:

No. 445 - Dec. 21, 1973

Prostitution Bad But Business Good  
Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Vietnam  
Miscellaneous News  
Headline-Making Events  
JCAN 1973 Index (Enclosure)

## PROSTITUTION IN KOREA: BUSINESS IS BOOMING

In 1971, a typical Japanese salary man needed six weeks' salary to qualify as an international traveler by visiting South Korea. In 1973, after two wage increases and two yen revaluations, four weeks' salary covers the basic costs. This fact, coupled with strong promotion campaigns, has led to a 400 per cent increase in Japanese tourists visiting South Korea in the past two years. Approximately 500,000 Japanese will visit Korea this year, and most of them are men expecting to spend a night or two with the "beautiful girl" promised them in the travel posters.

Though theoretically illegal, the highly-organized prostitution business has sparked the ROK tourist boom. Badly needed foreign exchange--over \$100 million worth--is rolling into the government coffers. Nevertheless, few Koreans seem quite as happy with the development as the financiers are. Korean Church Women United has demanded a "halt to sexual exploitation" and in July appealed to the Japan Women's Committee to try to harness the promoters of this exploitation in Japan (see JCAN, October 12).

Akiko Yamaguchi, Executive Secretary of the NCC Women's Committee, and Jim Stentzel, a JCAN editor, visited South Korea in November and filed the following report.

The November morning in Seoul is cold, sometimes below the freezing point. Dozens of girls pull their coats tight as they enter the chill from the back entrance of a big hotel. Shortly thereafter, groups of Japanese men pore out of the hotel's front entrance, following their respective flags to awaiting sightseeing buses. It's been another typical night at a typical tourist hotel.

The night probably began at one of Seoul's 14 major *kisaeng* (Korean-style *geisha*) houses, where the Japanese man paid roughly \$100 to be fed, entertained and slept with. The *kisaeng* herself ends up with about \$10--the rest goes to the house, the hotel (usually Jananese-owned), and the travel agent. In a good year, the *kisaeng* can earn as much as what eight of the tourists spent on their one-week trip -- over \$3,000. But she ages quickly and looks 40 when she's only 30.

The *kisaeng*, licensed by the government, has an "easy life" compared to thousands of young women who have migrated to Seoul looking for legitimate work. South Korea's glorified anti-communist, free enterprise system gives these women three basic choices: a 16-hour-day in a textile factory or tea room, or earning twice as much during 10 hours a night as a whore. The women are given totally free choice on how they want to be exploited.

Prostitution is as old as the world, but the Japanese tourist boom has institutionalized it in South Korea. It has become an integral part of the country's economic miracle. American GIs and non-Japanese tourists have done their share of exploitation too, but it pales before the on-rush of all-male Japanese tour groups.

"Naturally, the situation arouses strong anti-Japanese feelings," said a top Korean newspaper editor, "but the problem isn't just the Japanese--it's the whole atmosphere, the whole system. The travel agencies and hotels promote sex, so that's the kind of tourist they get."

(continued on page 2)

JCAN Dec. 21 \*  
p. 2 (125) \*

PROSTITUTION BAD (continued from page 1)

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"U.S. soldiers are relatively few, are isolated in one part of Seoul, and have some purposes other than sex. But the Japanese are all over the place, in every major sector of the city, visibly looking for sex and sex alone. What used to be done somewhat discreetly is now done baldly and commercially," he said.

The South Korean people see the current sexual exploitation in terms of the long history of Japan's imperial domination of Korea. "My heart aches whenever I see young girls coming to the hotel with Japanese men," said a woman in a hotel souvenir shop. Her heart aches not only because the girl is young but also because the man is Japanese. The woman remembers being a slave to the Japanese--something the girl is only finding out.

Meanwhile, members of Korean Church Women United are fighting for the human rights of these girls. Some women are visiting bars and restaurants to talk with the girls. Others are offering vocational training for less humiliating work. Meanwhile, the NCC Japan is continuing its efforts to get travel agents in Japan to encourage cultural rather than sexual trips to Korea.

Only time will tell whether these human efforts can counteract the well-oiled machinery of commercialized prostitution.

RECONSTRUCTION AND RECONCILIATION IN VIETNAM

The NCC has launched a campaign to raise ¥10 million (\$35,000) for reconstruction and reconciliation in Indochina. More than ¥700,000 has already been contributed to the fund, which will initially be used for medical and agricultural purposes in North and South Vietnam.

The Fund for Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Indochina held a board meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, November 18-20. John Nakajima, General Secretary of the NCC, reported that two major projects were approved:

- one million dollars to be used for rebuilding a hospital in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) which was destroyed by U.S. bombs in 1972; the hospital will have 500 beds and will serve some two million people of the province.
- one million dollars for the purchase of 700 power tillers and medical and pharmaceutical equipment by the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) in South Vietnam.

The FRRI board decided to postpone decisions on aid to Laos and Cambodia for the time being.

In another step toward reconciliation, a Vietnam Forum will be held in Saigon January 9-11, 1974. The forum will represent the first time that non-governmental Vietnamese groups have met to discuss priorities in the reconstruction task.

The NCC appeals to JCAN readers and others to contribute to this fund through the NCC Division of Service (address on front-page).

NATIONAL YM AND YWCA MEETING HELD

Dr. Hidekiyo Nakagawa, Professor of Christian Thought at International Christian University, was elected chairman of the Japan YMCA during its biennial assembly November 10-11. Dr. Nakagawa succeeds Dr. Shigeyoshi Matsumae, who was Constitutionally ineligible for election to a third term. The assembly approved a program including three focal points: to promote more international cooperation, to promote mutuality among national YMCAs, and to promote the training of new leaders.

Chairman Ayako Sekiya and General Secretary Asa Uoki were both re-elected to their posts at the triennial assembly of the Japan YWCA held November 23-25. The basic policy adopted by the assembly for the next three years is to become a power for change based on Christianity. Three points of emphasis under this policy are: to maintain Japan's non-nuclear policy, to actively promote a proper role for Japan in Asia, and to establish the right to education. (cont'd on p. 3)

## NATIONAL YM (cont'd from page 2)

In early December, the Korean YMCA elected Moon Kyu Kang to be its next general secretary. Kang, presently Asia Secretary for the World Student Christian Federation based in Tokyo, is expected to assume his new post by mid-1974.

\* JCAN Dec. 21

\* p. 3 (126)

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## WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE

The Japan Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace sent nine delegates to the United Nations in New York November 16-26. The delegation witnessed the WCRP's admission to the UN under a non-governmental observer status.

During their visit, the delegates had consultations with top UN officials, including General Secretary Kurt Waldheim, and with various staff members of the NCC-USA. They also presented an appeal for peace to the UN.

The Japan-U.S. Joint Committee of the WCRP met in New York and decided to meet in Belgium next March 18 to prepare for the Second World Conference on Religion and Peace, to be held some time in 1974.

## HUNGER STRIKE PROTESTS JAPAN-ROK TIES

Several members of the Youth Council of the Korean Christian Church in Japan began a one-week hunger strike in Tokyo's busy Ginza area on December 17. The protest was directed at the Japan-South Korea Ministerial Conference scheduled to begin in Tokyo on December 20. The conference, originally scheduled for September 8 but canceled due to the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung, is to decide the size and scope of Japan's economic aid to South Korea. The aid package--estimated at nearly \$200 million--has become a symbol of Japan's support for the repressive policies of the ROK president and CIA. As a minimum, the fasting youth demanded political freedom for Kim as a condition for holding the ministerial conference.

## YAMASHITA GETS NEW APPOINTMENT

Masaichi Yamashita completed a four-year term as field director of Asian Christian Service in Vietnam on December 15. He returns to Vietnam in January to begin a two-year appointment as director of the World Alliance YMCA's Refugee Service in Vietnam.

## ANNIVERSARY AT OISO ACADEMY HOUSE

The Oiso Academy House of Nippon Christian Academy commemorated its tenth anniversary on November 17. Dr. Morizo Ishidate, chairman of the board of directors, delivered a special lecture on "Whither the Academy?" Among the honored guests were Dr. Erhart Müller, founder of the worldwide academy movement; Dr. Albert Schmidt, original instigator of the movement in Japan; and Dr. Rentok Tei, director of the Taiwan academy movement.

See you next year

Next issue is Jan. 18, 1974.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* The Energy Crisis and its Pervasive Effect on Japanese Life:

The oil crisis will result in a 20% cut in electric power consumption for Japanese industries with speculation that homes will also be hit. A 20% reduction in electric power would reduce industrial output to levels that existed three to five years ago. 244 smaller gas firms were faced with critical shortages of LP gas. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry announced that there was 57.5 day supply of oil on hand as of the end of November this year.

With the sudden death of Finance Minister Aichi and the attendant reshuffle of the cabinet, there has been an unprecedented level of activity within the government related to the energy crisis. The regular Diet opened December 1st and has concentrated on emergency legislation to control oil allocations, prevent inflation through "livelihood stabilization" laws and clamp down on commodity speculation resulting from a dearth of consumer goods. But this rush of emergency legislation and its publicity in the mass media has caused the wholesale price index to sky-rocket in an already malignantly inflationary economy. The wholesale price index shot up 3.2 per cent in November alone--which would be an increase of more than 38 per cent a year--and a higher increase is predicted for this month. The consumer price index, especially relating to daily household necessities, will increase much more than the wholesale price index. Retailers are marking up items 50 per cent and more, not only to capitalize on the inflationary psychology, but because of short supplies. There are many stories of hoarding by manufacturers and distributors, and equally many stories of consumers driving up prices through panic buying and stock-piling of goods. The resulting inflation has already surpassed the record set 22 years ago when the Korean War broke out.

The economic situation has brought the popularity of the Tanaka regime to a record low. In mid-December, only 22 per cent of the Japanese people approved of the job the Prime Minister was doing--a drop from over 65 per cent only 16 months ago. While Tanaka argues that most of the inflation has been generated by the oil crisis, independent economic surveys show that the bulk of the inflation has resulted from the government's monetary and fiscal policies, most of which are geared to beg business.

The situation has also affected the strength of the yen, which has steadily weakened in relation to the dollar (going from ¥265 to ¥280 per one dollar). The Japanese people have been in a quandry as to what to do with their record-sized December bonuses: in the past, time-deposit savings were somewhat lucrative as well as safe; now inflation eats up much more than even the highest interest yields. If savings deposits decrease, it will have repercussions on loans, especially to small businesses.

The depth of fear about the economy was illustrated in the Nagoya area during mid-December, when thousands of depositors converged on a prefectural bank demanding cash from their savings accounts. Investigators said the rush was caused by two girls talking on a train about the bank not being terribly sound financially. Not even a statement from the Bank of Japan could stop the panic.

Meanwhile, there are predictions of zero economic growth for 1974. The most optimistic predictions are for three per cent real growth. (The GNP may increase as much as 30 per cent--but most if not all of this would be due to inflation.) Social welfare projects in Japan, and economic aid programs overseas, will be hard hit. Public welfare institutions are already being hit with shortages of cash, food and heating fuel.

In Tokyo, there is no rain and little oil, yet smog darkens the December skies. Last week the government issued a sulphur smog warning--the first such warning ever during December.